

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS COMMUNICATOR

PROMOTING – COMMUNICATING – FUNDRAISING – NEWS | TERM 2, 2007

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Editorial

Welcome to the Australian Schools Communicator, a newsletter devoted to providing schools with useful information about promoting, communicating and fund-raising.

The topic of this Term's feature article is writing a successful media release. A good media release can generate free publicity in the media. It is also regarded as more valuable than an advertisement, as it carries more credibility.

A simple media release can bring great rewards. An example close to home is what a media release recently achieved for the Australian Schools Directory and the Private Schools Directory.

It generated coast to coast interviews and media coverage - from Nova Radio in Perth, to the Northern Territory News in Darwin. On the day articles about the Directories appeared in Melbourne's Sunday Age and Sydney's Sun Herald the number of visitors to the Directories doubled!

See some of the news articles generated by our media release on the website under 'For Schools'. A total of 42,856 people visited the Directories between March and May 14. Annual estimates indicate it will be well above 250,000 in first year. Some of this traffic is due to a humble media release.

Secrets of a Successful Media Release

The ultimate aim of writing a media release is to have your information published or broadcast, and to have the media accurately reflect what you wish to convey.

The secret to achieving this outcome is to write your media release in the way a journalist would write a news article.

This makes the story sound newsworthy, it makes the editor's or reporter's job easier, and can even mean that all, or some of your information, is run just as you wrote it.

Writing a media release also helps you and your organisation define your message and what you want to say to convey it. It's also a useful guide if you are to be interviewed.

These are the golden rules of writing a good media release.

Newsworthiness

Identify or create a newsworthy angle. Some or one of the following may provide a newsworthy angle:

Something new, unusual, relevant to the audience, a prominent person, a current topic, a conflict, or human interest story.

For a local newspaper a newsworthy angle could be: *A local talent contest will be held at the Christie College fete in Hampton next week.*

It's unusual, has human interest and is more relevant to the audience than: *Christie College is holding a fete next week.*

PROMOTE YOUR SCHOOL IN THE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS DIRECTORY & PRIVATE SCHOOLS DIRECTORY



2007-2008 SCHOOL MARKETING BUDGET

Allocate funds for a Feature Page in the
Australian Schools Directory \$250 a year
Private Schools Directory \$250 a year

INTRODUCTORY SPECIAL!

Australian Schools Directory

Book a Feature Page before **May 18** - \$150 for a year

If first school in your area - only \$75 for a year

Private Schools Directory \$200 for a year

Long-term promotion direct to your Target audience Contact info@futuremediagroup.com.au Tel (03) 9598 0385



Lay-out

- The story should start with the most important information first, and continue in descending order of importance (Sub-editors usually shorten stories from bottom up).
- Each paragraph should only be one sentence long.
- Double-space copy and allow extra space between paragraphs.

Language

Be factual. Avoid opinion unless in a quote. Support opinion with facts. Omit flowery adjectives. Avoid unnecessary words. Use plain, simple language.

Summarise quotes

Before you quote a spokesperson write a sentence that introduces the speaker - if it's the first time they are referred to - and summarises what they are about to say. (See "Third paragraph" in the format.)

Quotes

- Unless it's a simple announcement, use quotes in your media release.
- Remember to use only 1 sentence to a paragraph.
- When you have a series of 3 quotes this is how to punctuate and express them.

1st quote ".....," Mr Brown said.

2nd quote ".....," he said.

Subsequent quotes "..... full-stop

Last quote "....." end quote marks.

Other items to note:

- Single digit numbers are written as words, double digit are written as numbers
- Dates are May 12, 2007 (not 12th).
- Use capitals only for names
- Make titles succinct - Christie College principal John Brown (not 'the principal of Christie College, John..')
- Use 'said' everywhere (not explained or added)
- The word 'includes' is a magic word in journalism that allows you to list several items, without having to list all. Our curriculum includes

A Confident Approach

Don't be timid. As the media does, be a bit dramatic, be bold and sound important. Put your best foot forward.

Lead paragraph

The lead (first) paragraph should be strong, succinct and capture the most interesting aspect of your story.

Instead of: *Christie College participated in the Commonwealth Maths competition last month and the school was informed this week that our students had won four first places* write : **Four Christie College students were awarded distinctions in the 2007 Commonwealth Maths competition this week.**

Second Paragraph

The second paragraph should expand on and support the lead paragraph.

More than 6000 students across Australia entered the competition and 100 received distinctions.

Third paragraph

In the third paragraph introduce a person that you quote and summarise what they are about to say.

Christie College Principal John Brown said the students will be honoured at a school assembly featuring special guests.

Fourth, fifth and sixth paragraph

"We are very proud of the students' achievement and they will be honoured in a formal school assembly," Mr Brown said.

"Students will receive their awards from the Chairman of the school board," he said.

"Former pupil and respected Mathematics professor Dr Sue Smith will speak about the school's tradition of maths excellence."

Remainder of Media Release

Write the next most important piece of information. This could be relevant factual statements like:

Christie College is in Hampton and offers an extension classes for students with exceptional maths abilities.

Or it could be some more quotes from the spokesperson. Start with *Mr Brown said* or *According to Mr Brown*, summarising the next few quotes in a sentence and then quoting, using format above.

You can finish with background information that is not vital to story, but could be relevant, like: *Christie College was established in 1987 and has 800 pupils.*

Sign the media release off with a contact person's name and phone number.



Funding Assistance for Marketing to International Students

Schools that market themselves to international students may be eligible for grants from Austrade.

The Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme is a key Australian Government financial assistance program for aspiring and current exporters.

Administered by Austrade, the scheme supports educational institutions to market and promote to international students wanting to study in Australia.

The EMDG scheme encourages small and medium sized Australian businesses to develop export markets and reimburses up to 50 per cent of expenses incurred on eligible export marketing activities above a \$15,000 threshold.

Some of the expense categories include international travel, attending exhibitions, advertising and producing marketing literature.

To access the scheme for the first time, institutions need to have spent \$15,000 over two years on eligible export marketing expenses.

Certain eligibility criteria apply for access to the scheme. For more information regarding EMDG please refer to <http://www.austrade.gov.au/default.aspx?FolderID=1356>

*You may wish to enquire if any of the cost of a Feature Page on the Australian Schools Directory or the Private Schools Directory could be claimed under the EMDG scheme.

School to School

Speech Language Disorders

Some teachers and parents may like to know that the Glenleighden School in Fig Tree Pocket in Brisbane provides an education programme for children with primary speech language disorders. As far as the school is aware it's the only school in Australia specialising in this area.

Small Schools

Wandering Primary School is a small rural school, situated in the midst of forests and farms, 130km south east of Perth. We would like to get in touch with other small isolated country schools in other States. The purpose would be to exchange ideas about small schools issues and perhaps to make penpals. As we are so small, our children are learning about the power of communication by the internet to overcome distance and isolation. Please contact us at wandering.ps@det.wa.edu.au.

National Hockey Championships

Hockey ACT invites all schools to participate in the 2007 Quikstix School's Cup from December 9 to 13 at the National Hockey Centre, Canberra. Quikstix heading into its 11th year is a unique event - being the only of its kind for school-based teams. Over the years this event has attracted participants from local, interstate and international teams, with a number returning year after year. Teams are under 14's, Under 16's and Under 18's. We also cater for small schools to share participants! Please contact Rob Sheekey on (02) 6257 2374, or operations@hockeycanberra.org.au

If your school would like to have a free announcement in School to School please just email your contribution to info@futuremediagroup.com.au

Schools Directory – list your school's Curriculum, Facilities and Features

Please take advantage of the opportunity to list your subjects and facilities in the Curriculum Search on the Australian Schools Directory and the Private Schools Directory. Just tick a list on the website that indicates what your school offers. Parents looking for a particular subject or facility or program will then find your school in a search. Log in here with your User Name and Password:

http://www.australianschoolsdirectory.com.au/school_login.php. and select 'Insert Curriculum details'. If you do not have your User Name and Password please contact info@australianschoolsdirectory.com.au

